Gender Gap at Various Educational Level Among the Tribals in Jharkhand: A Case Study of Ranchi Municipal Corporation

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1. INTRODUCTION

The tribal population, recognized as the earliest inhabitants of India, consists of over 400 distinct groups and represents approximately 8% of the country's total population. Scheduled Tribes referred to as Adivasis (original inhibitions from 'Adi' means old and 'Vasi' means those who stay) and lived in India thousands of years before the Aryan invasion qualify them to be called aboriginals or indigenous.

The Tribes are spread throughout India, with significant concentrations across the central, northeast, and western regions. According to the Census of India, 2011 Lakshadweep has the highest proportion of scheduled tribes population (within the state) at 94.8%, followed by Mizoram (94.4%), Nagaland (86.5%), Meghalaya (86.1%), and Arunachal Pradesh (68.8%). Uttar Pradesh ranks last with the lowest proportion of ST population of 0.56%, followed by Tamil Nadu (1.1%), Bihar (1.28%), Kerala (1.45%), and Uttarakhand (2.89%) [1].

Jharkhand's total scheduled tribes population in the state is 26.20 % against an all-India average of 8.29% percent and ranks 6th in the total distribution of the scheduled tribe population in the country. It has 32 Tribal Groups, prominent among them are Santhal, Munda, Oraon, and Ho, and 8 out of 32 tribes of Jharkhand fall under the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG). Asur, Birhor, Birajia, Korwa, Savar, Pahariya (Baiga), Mal Pahariya, and Souriya Pahariya are the prominent primitive tribal groups of Jharkhand. They are the most isolated and disadvantaged Indigenous tribal groups in the state, with a noticeable decrease in their population .

Education is viewed as a standout amongst the most essential and potential instruments for the advancement of a country. Globally, 123 million youth (aged 15 to 24) lack crucial reading and writing skills. Sixty-one percent of them are young women. Gender gaps in youth literacy rates are also narrowing. There were 95 literate young women for every 100 young men in 2010, compared with 90 women in 1990 [2]. "The National Policy of Education, 1986, updated in 1992, pays greater attention to the education of educationally backward minorities in the interest of equality and social justice. However, marginalized groups like scheduled tribes are in a more disadvantaged position as compared to the other social groups. The term 'double disadvantage' has been used to characterize the socio-economic and spatial marginalization of Scheduled Tribes in India "[3]. Albeit the scheduled tribes are backward, the position of the

girls within the social group is more vulnerable as they are often doubly disadvantaged due to both their social status and their gender. Gender equity is a significant concern as the school dropout among the scheduled tribes girls is 67% as compared to scheduled tribe boys at the elementary level. Girls are disadvantaged because family and social roles often do not prioritize their education [4]. The gender disparity in literacy rates is enormous, and the more striking characteristic is visible among marginalized groups.

2. STATE OF ART:

Ratnagar (2003), in his Study, explained that race, habitat, or religious practice do not characterize tribes. However, they are characterized by the bonding fabric of kinship and joint ownership of the natural resources from which they live. Joint resources include agricultural land, wells, forest trees and game, river water, river fish, etc. There is no private property in these. About 400-500 years ago, Jharkhand was a tribal area, and the land master in Jharkhand mainly depended on agriculture and forest products for their livelihood [5]. Similarly, **Shil et.al. (2002)** argued in their study that *"Tribals in the Jharkhand assert their Adivasi identity based on four factors, i.e., heredity, occupation, i.e., mainly cultivation, religious activities (Adi Dharma) like Sarhul, Karamadi, Sarna astral, etc, and through Constitutional provision as the indigenous people were known as 'Janajati' during the pre-British era and were classified as 'backward tribes' following the Government of India Act of 1935"* [6].

Xaxa (1999) has distinguished between *'Hinduization' and 'Sanskritization'* of the tribe and made a subtle point that tribal transformation can move in the direction of the peasantry. However, it will be without the loss of those attributes that characterize the tribes [7].

The study by **Deogharia (2015)** highlighted that *"from 1987 to 2005, poverty declined in the state albeit slowly, and the literacy rate of tribal people, both males and females, was less than the state average. Though it has increased since 1991, it is found that there are variations in the literacy rate among the tribals group, and the highest among the Khond, Oraon, Kharia, and Chick Baraik are above 50%".* These tribes also demonstrate higher female education as well. The lowest among the tribes are the Pahariya and Korwa with just 5.47% and 6.45% literacy rates after nearly by Baiga, Savar, Birhor, Sauriya Pahariya, Mal Pahariya, Banjara, Kharwar, and Asur having female education is below 15%, like education [8].

A study by **Isalm et al. (2014**) highlighted that there are also variations in the economic conditions and economic activities across tribes, as most tribes are dependent on agricultural activities, forestry, and work in a range of service sectors [9]. The Primitive Tribal Groups like

Birhors critical part in sustenance gathering, rope making, nectar gathering, natural restorative plant accumulation, container making, etc [10]**.**

The study of **(Ghosh 2007)** are focused on the gender gap in literacy and education among the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand and West Bengal as measured by the gender disparity index. This study highlighted that gender disparities among most tribes tend to increase at higher levels of school education. He argued that *"The gender gap in literacy and education is an important dimension of gender inequality, and it is contingent on social, cultural and economic factors. When discriminatory cultural practices intervene in precarious living conditions of the marginalised groups, poverty becomes a prime factor for persistence of gender gap in literacy and education"* [11].

Mitra et.al. (2008) has studied the education of tribal in the north eastern state in India. the study found that the high status of women among the tribal group in northeastern states has important effect on the literacy rates, enrolment ratios and dropout rates of girls. He also highlighted that *"High-poverty rates pose to be significant obstacles in attaining literacy and education among tribal women in India. Economic, social, and cultural backgrounds are important factors among the various tribes need to be emphasized in order to understand the differential nature of investments in literacy rates and schooling among tribal women in India"*[12].

The study by **Kumar (2008)** highlighted the grim picture of universal access to primary education. He argued that *"Access to education is one of the state's significant challenges and due to lack in education tribal children and several marginalized groups of children in Jharkhand are trapped in a continuous vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and deprivation"*. Among the total tribal literates, 33.6 percent are either Census 2001 shows the proportions of literates who have attained education up to primary level and middle level are 28.6 % and 17.7 % respectively. Persons educated to matric and higher secondary constitute only 16.5 %, and here too, the inter-tribe differences can be observed as among the Scheduled tribe Kharia, Oraon, and Munda have more than 50% school going children and Santhal, Ho, Lohra have 36-47% children going to school [13].

Ramachandran and Deepan (2017) studied the educational status of tribes in India. He argued that education changes the cultural norms and patterns of life of tribal women, makes them economically independent, and helps them organize themselves to form solid groups. However, tribal education status is much lower than scheduled castes. The author further

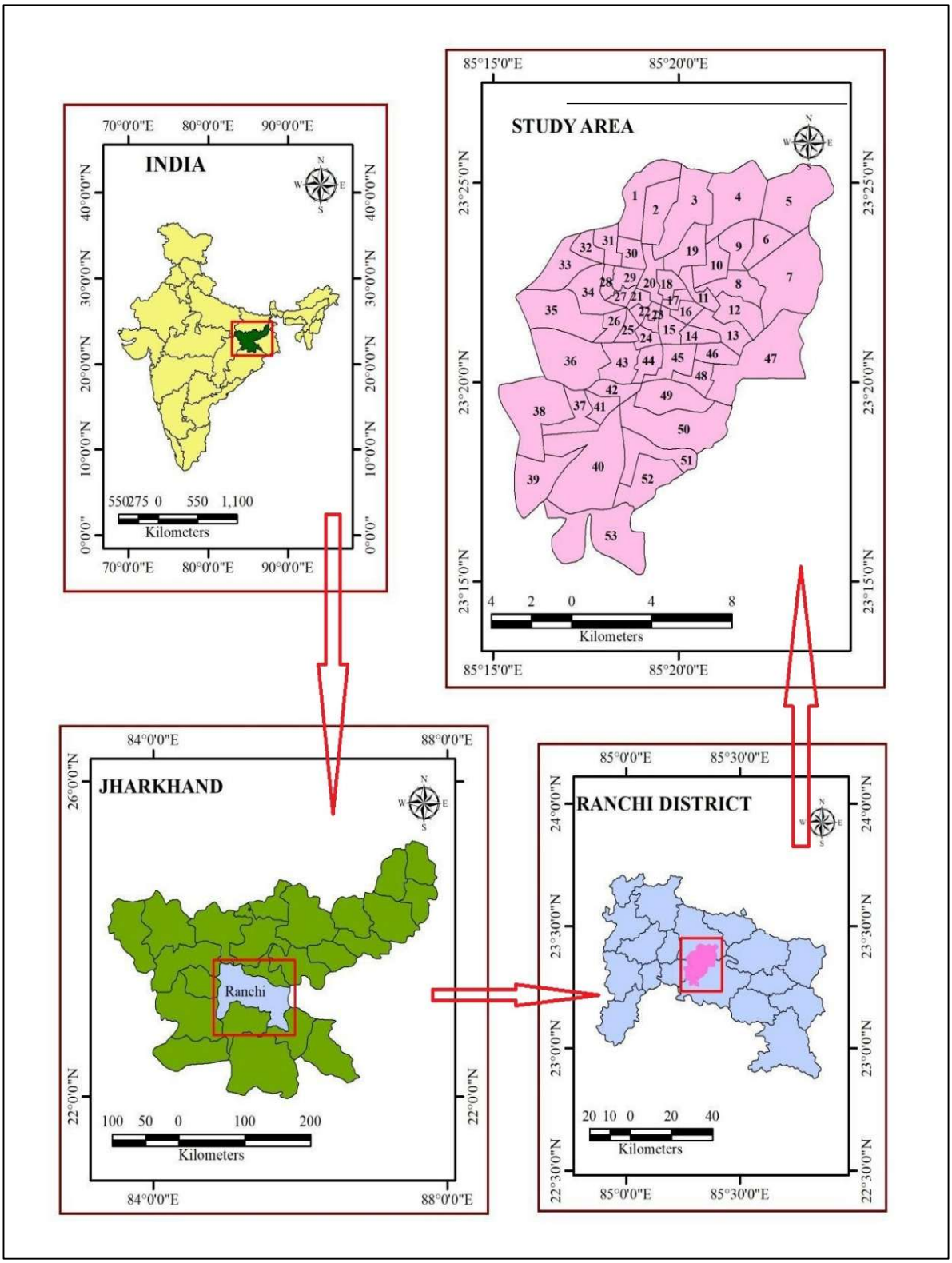
argued that "*policymakers paid little attention to culturally linked education, which led to higher dropout rates among the tribes".* [14].

Singh (2020) studied girls' education in Jharkhand and highlighted that Jharkhand has the highest dropout rate among schoolchildren in India, and scheduled tribes have the highest dropout rate among all communities. The author highlighted significant disparities in male-female education and that tribes are more vulnerable but have not comprehensively studied the tribes and related issues. She argued that "*The Jharkhand government has been one of the most unstable governments among the Indian States. It is mostly the duty of the government to create awareness and make provisions with regard to the girls' education. But, the poor conditions of the school itself speak a lot about the government's efforts, wherein there aren't proper toilets for girls, the teacher to pupil ratio is 43:1 when it should be 35:1, around 6 lakh children do not go to schools. But, there is a major role to be played by society as well"* [4].

A study by **Rani et.al. (2024),** highlighted that factors such as cultural customs, poverty, the absence of educational institutions in rural areas, the medium of instructions, parental education, and school location all significantly contribute to the low enrolments of tribal students. He argued that *"The ignorance and neglect of parents regarding their children's education is a serious problem as well. Poverty is a major barrier to educational access because it keeps underprivileged households from funding their children's education with money for supplies like books, school supplies, uniforms, meals, and transportation. Another challenge in providing elementary education to tribes is their geographic location"* [15].

Despite substantial scholarly attention, prior studies have insufficiently explored gender disparities at the micro level. Persistent gender gaps remain, particularly among marginalized groups, which are often more vulnerable and warrant closer examination. To address this, further research is needed to understand how these disparities manifest within specific communities and the varying degrees of inequality experienced by different demographics.

3. STUDY AREA



Source: Survey of India and Ranchi Master Plan, 2015

Jharkhand is a state in Eastern India carved out of the southern part of Bihar on November 15, 2000. The state has an area of 79,710 sq. km and an average elevation of 61366m (from the mean sea level). It lies in the central-north-eastern region of India. The population of Jharkhand is about 33 million, includes 32,620 villages, and is home to various ethnic tribes, namely Munda, Oraon, Ho, Santhal, and Paharia. The study focuses on the Ranchi Municipal Area. The city of Ranchi is located within the Ranchi district and extends from $23^0$15' North to $23^0$26' North latitude and $85^0$15' East to $85^0$25' East longitude. According to the *E-Patrika*[1], Volume 1, published by the Ranchi Municipal Corporation in July 2015, the geographical area of Ranchi city is approximately 174.91sq. km, constituting about 3.44% of the total area of Ranchi district in Jharkhand. Initially, the city was divided into 55 wards, but following a boundary re-demarcation in 2017, the number of wards was reduced to 53. Based on the 2011 Census, Ranchi had a population of 1,073,427, making it a metropolitan city and the second most populous municipal corporation in Jharkhand, following Dhanbad. The population density of the Ranchi Municipal area in 2011 was recorded at 6,137 persons per sq. km. However, Ranchi Municipal Corporation is choosing to understand the determinants and challenges of attaining literacy among male and female children from scheduled tribes. The rationale behind choosing Ranchi is that after becoming the capital city of Jharkhand state, there has been rapid growth in the city in terms of area and population, and also the number of Scheduled Tribes population is highest as compared to other districts of Jharkhand, about 35.76% of the total population is Scheduled Tribes population.

4. PROBLEMS TO BE INVESTIGATED

(i) What are the trends of literacy rates and the gaps in literacy among the males and females of the tribal population of Jharkhand?

(ii) How does the gender disparity vary among the tribal at different levels of education across different wards of Ranchi Municipal cooperation?

(iii) How do socio-economic status and culture influence the disparity in educational opportunities between male and female tribal members in the region?

[1] Ranchi Municipal Corporation Office, E-Patrika, 1st part of 1st Volume, July 2015, pp. 1-3 Available from-www.ranchimunicipal.com/docs/Volume-1.pdf

(iv) What interventions and policy measures are most effective in narrowing the gender gap in literacy and education among tribal communities, mainly focusing on empowering tribal women?

5. OBJECTIVE

(i) To analyze the district-wise literacy gap among tribals in Jharkhand.

(ii) To study the gender disparity among tribals at different levels of education, i.e., primary, middle, and senior secondary in Ranchi Municipal Corporation.

(iii) To investigate the determinant influencing the disparity among tribals specifically focused on Ranchi Municipal Corporation.

(iv) To study the programs and policies launched by state and central government, including non-governmental organizations, to reduce the disparity.

6. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

(i) There is no literacy gap between males and females of tribal in Jharkhand

(ii) There will be a high rate of enrollment and a lower rate of dropout of tribal among tribal girls in Ranchi Municipal Corporation.

(iii) Gender disparity is low at different education levels among tribals in Ranchi Municipal Corporation.

(iv) Socioeconomic and cultural are primary factors influencing the disparity between Tribal

7. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

The Study will use mixed research methods, i.e., qualitative and quantitative. This study will use quantitative techniques to understand the disparity in literacy between males and females among tribals in Jharkhand. At the micro level, Ranchi Municipal Cooperation was selected to calculate the gender disparity index and also the factors influencing the disparity. The qualitative techniques will be used to understand in-depth problems of the education system and the challenges that tribal girls face while entering and at different levels of education. The study will use purposive sampling to select the schools at the different wards of Ranchi Municipal Corporation, and the data will be collected through a questionnaire and scheduled. The sample will be collected until the responses reach saturation, that is, repetition of the responses.

8. SOURCES OF DATA AND TOOLS FOR COLLECTION

The study will use Primary and secondary data sources to fulfill the objective.

I. **Primary Data source**:

II. The study will begin by collecting enrollment and dropout data from public schools across various wards within the municipal jurisdiction. Two schools will be purposefully selected from each ward in such a way that it provide both primary and secondary levels of education. Key informant interviews will be conducted with school teachers, headmasters, and ward members, while public administrators will also be interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges. Additionally, data will be collected through questionnaires and schedules from households with children either enrolled in or dropped out of school. In-depth interviews will continue until data saturation is reached, ensuring comprehensive qualitative insights. Household selection will focus on those belonging to Indigenous tribal communities to ensure a representative and focused understanding of the dropout issue within this population.

III. Secondary Data

The secondary data includes available and published data for the public. This study will utilize different secondary data sources, including the Census of India, the Department of School Education and Literacy (UDISE REPORT), the Ministry of Education, the National Sample Survey Organisation, the Ministry of Tribal Development, Etc.

Tools

Data collection is the process of collecting and analyzing information on relevant variables in

a predetermined, methodical way so that one can respond to specific research questions, test hypotheses, and assess the results. The tools or devices used to gather data include a paper questionnaire or a system for computer-assisted interviews. The tools that would be used to collect and save data include

1) Questionnaire.
2) Checklists and Guideline.
3) Microsoft Word & Excel.
4) GIS + Remote Sensing + Google Earth App + Stata
5) Cameras

9. ANALYSIS OF DATA:

(i) The study involves descriptive and statistical studies to show the population distribution and analysis of the data to fulfill the objectives mentioned above. It will also be put to test of different kinds like t-test, etc, for validating the significance of the hypothesis proposed if the result is positive to the proposed hypothesis.

(ii) The following formula has calculated the literacy rate of the ST population

Literacy Rate of Male = Total literate male population / total population of 7+ males *100.

Literacy Rate of Female = Total female literate population / total population of 7+ female population * 100.

(iii) The difference between the literacy rate of males and females calculates the literacy gap.

(iv) **Gender Disparity Index (GDI)** is the ratio of female to male literacy within a scale of 0.000 to 1.000. The lower female literacy than male literacy is indicated by the score always less than 1.000. The lower the score on a scale of 0.000 to 1.000, the greater the gender disparity between males and females in literacy; a higher score indicates lower gender disparity, and a lower score indicates higher gender disparity [13]. Here, the literate population of ST males and females has been taken.

GDI = yp / y * x / xp

Where x is the total male population seven years and above, xp is the male population at a given level of education, y is the total female population seven years and above, and yp is the female population at a given level of education. (Here, the total male and female literacy populations are taken instead of the population at any given level of education).

(v) The correlation and regression will show the association between the variables determining the gap between males and females.

(vi) The histogram, bar graph, line graph, pie chart, and choropleth map will be used for the graphical representation.

a) **TENTATIVE CHAPTERS:**

Introduction

Chapter 1: Geographical Background

Chapter 2: Concept of Gender Gap and Gender Disparity Index

Chapter 3: Determinants of Gender Disparity

Chapter 4: Sample Study

Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

Chapter 6: Programmes, Policies and other Initiative by Government

Conclusion and Suggestions

References

Bibliography

Appendix

10. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY –

The overall literacy of tribals is low, even lower for tribal females, and that is a subject of significant concern [16]. The paper focuses on the gender gap in literacy among the tribals in Jharkhand. The paper will highlight the overall gender gap and gender gap at different education levels that will help identify the concerned regions to implement the region-specific remedial policies and steps taken to solve the problem.

11. RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT-DAY PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF SOCIETY:

Education is essential for the holistic progress of any nation. Education is a fundamental requirement for the citizens of a nation. Historically, a wide gap exists between males and females in literacy rate and educational attainment. Males, always dominating, tend to overshadow their counterparts in society. As a result, women become the deprived section of society in almost every component of socio-economic development. Increased literacy facilitates increasing knowledge, ultimately enlightening the numerous paths of human life. The right to be literate is fundamental for all. Nevertheless, women always lag behind men. Studying the gender gap in education and literacy levels among tribal communities in

Jharkhand is crucial for understanding Gender inequality, social development, empowerment of tribal women, health and family welfare, and also from the human rights perspective.

12. CONTRIBUTION TO EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

Earlier studies have widely suggested disparities between males and females at the education level. There is a broad educational gap between males and females, which further leads to gender inequality and further exacerbates women's status in society. The studies on the education level of tribal have consistently highlighted that tribal women are more vulnerable as compared to other marginalized groups. However, the tribal communities are heterogeneous in nature. Tribes like Santhal and Oraon are much better positioned than other tribal groups. There are minimal studies on gender education, which are also specific to tribes. The studies will contribute to the heterogeneity in gender disparity among the tribal groups in Jharkhand, enabling scholars to look into the problem from a new dimension and encourage policymakers to target group-based approaches for reducing gender inequalities.

13. FUTURE WORK:

The education of tribals cannot be left to short-term Plan strategies. The tribes lay in much lower social strata, and different factors varied geographically and culturally, restricting them from attaining education, which should be further examined. Gender inequalities in terms of education are one of the components of the research. Still, other determinants influence the entry of females to educational institutes, which should be researched. The study is limited only to school-level education. Still, there may be wide disparities at much higher levels, which should be considered and understood how they vary in higher studies.

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